

ex-off/summary

gravel vol. iii op390-8,433-85
especially 395-6
OSD IV,C,5 p. 30-31, p. 110-112

Summarizes White House meetings at end of 7/65 to consider troop deployments:
"Many government officials close to the developments of that week are convinced that the image of a soul-searching and agonizing examination of alternatives, including the option of cutting our losses and pulling out, was an accurate ~~xxx~~ reflection of what actually occurred.... There are others who feel the President almost certainly knew by the end of the first day's discussion, and perhaps even before the meeting started, what he planned to do.... It is my belief that the issue of additional deployments was already resolved; the only question was how many troops the President felt he could commit."

1/27/72 mhl

Cooper p.284-5

ex-off/summary

gravel vol. iii p394&447
OSD IV,C,25 16,56-6Z
124-126

NSAM 328

Summarizes 4/1&2/65 NSC meeting: "The President agreed to send approximately 20,000 troops and two additional Marine battalions to Vietnam. He also agreed to permit the Marine units guarding major American installations to engage in active combat."

L/26/72 mhl

Cooper p. 270

ex-off/summary

gravel vol. ii p.357-60²
OSD IV,C,9,a

also gravel vol. iii p.436-7,57

i "In the spring of 1965 the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed that the military assume responsibility for a large part of the American AID programs in Vietnam's rural areas. The proposition was that 'Civil Affairs' teams, as in World War II, should be deployed throughout Vietnam to serve as integral parts of the provincial governments... There was considerable steam behind the plan, however, and it might have been adopted had Ambassador Taylor not rejected the idea."

1/26/72 mhl

Cooper p 275-6

p. 5-6 1 N1 New York Times, 5-19-65, p. 1, "U. S. May Modify
2 Vietnam Tactics"

p. 7-8, 25, 27, 47, 90, 104, 114 3 N2 New York Times, 7-12-65, p. 1, "Americans Called
4 Ready to Assume Main Burden of War on Vietcong"

p. 113 5 N3 New York Times, 3-16-65, p. 1, "Administration Steps
6 Up Pressure to Force End of Aid to Guerillas"

p. 13, 51 7 N4 New York Times, 4-2-65, p. 6, "Vietcong Forming Bigger
8 Units; Hinting War is Near Third Phase"

p. 14, 56 9 N5 New York Times, 3-24-65, p. 6, "War-Gas Debate Stirs
10 Commons"

p. 14, 56, 67 11 N6 New York Times, 3-26-65, p. 1, "U. S. Bombs Radar
12 in North Vietnam"

p. 15, 67 13 N7 New York Times, 3-27-65, p. 1, "U. S. Strikes Deep in
14 North Vietnam"

p. 15, 21, 27, 41-48, 84, 104, 114 15 N8 New York Times, 5-8-65, p. 1, "Full Combat Role for
16 GI is Likely in Vietnam Soon"

p. 16-20 17 N9 New York Times, 4-20-65, p. 27, "UPI Clients Are
18 Told Parleys On Vietnam Offer Best Way Out"

p. 17, 59, 69, 124 19 N10 New York Times, 4-11-65, p. 1, "Marine Units Join the
20 Build-Up At Bases in Vietnam"

p. 21, 70, 78, 80 21 N11 New York Times, 4-21-65, p. 3, "Build-Up Reported Planned"

p. 21-22, 77, 80 22 N12 New York Times, 4-25-65, p. 4, "Taylor Discusses
23 Build-Up"

p. 22, 46 24 N13 New York Times, 4-11-65, p. 4, "Hanoi's Goal: One
25 Vietnam"

p. 22, 46 26 N14 New York Times, 4-15-65, p. 3, "Air Attacks in South
27 Vietnam Hurting Morale of Vietcong"

p. 22, 46 28 N15 New York Times, 4-26-65, p. 1, "Hanoi Troop Units Fighting
29 in South"

- p. 25, 47, 90 1 N17 New York Times, 6-5-65, p. 1, "U. S. Officer Sees GI Combat Role In Vietnam Soon"
- p. 25-27, 90-91 2 N18 New York Times, 7-4-65, p. 4, "How Johnson Makes Foreign Policy"
- p. 25, 47-51 3 N19 New York Times, 7-11-65, "U. S. Combat Unites In Vietnam Spurt"
- p. 26, 28 4 N20 New York Times, 6-25-65, p. 1, "Dirksen Says U. S. May Soon Double Force In Vietnam"
- p. 26, 28 5 N21 New York Times, 6-26-65, p. 4, "Arms Boost Rise Urged By Stennis"
- p. 27-28, 31 6 N22 New York Times, 7-12-65, p. 1, "Limited Reserve Call-Up To Support Vietnam Seen"
- p. 31 7 N23 New York Times, 7-21-65, p. 36, "Build-Up In Vietnam"
- p. 28, 31, 110, 112, 117 8 N24 New York Times, 7-4-65, p. 7, "Vast Building Program Started In Vietnam"
- p. 27, 83, 110 9 N25 New York Times, 6-15-65, p. 1, "Portions of Three U. S. Divisions Reported Going to Vietnam"
- p. 31, 117, 118 10 N26 New York Times, 7-22-65, p. 1, "Johnson Starts Sweeping Survey of Vietnam Role"
- p. 30-31 11 N27 New York Times, 1-21-65, p. 1, "Shortage of Arms and Men Plagues Army and Reserve"
- p. 31 12 N28 New York Times, 7-18-65, p. 1, "U. S. Command in Saigon Backs Increase In Troops"
- p. 41 13 N29 New York Times, 4-3-65, p. 1, "U. S. Plans Step-Up In Troops and Aid For Vietnam War"
- p. 42, 44, 53 14 N30 New York Times, 5-7-65, p. 3, "9,000 U. S. Troops Land In Vietnam"
- p. 42, 44 15 N31 New York Times, 4-7-65, p. 1, "Defense Department Releases Photo of North Vietnam Bomb Damage"

- p.54 1 N34 New York Times, 3-28-65, p. 32, "The Importance of
2 Being Bundy"
- p.59 3 N35 New York Times, 5-4-65, p. 3, "Marines Lifted From
4 Base"
- p.82 5 N36 New York Times, 6-5-65, p. 6, "IL-28 Still U. S. Concern"
- p.82 6 N37 New York Times, 6-30-65, p. 1, "U. S. Troop Open First
7 Big Attack Against Vietcong"
- p.83 8 N38 New York Times, 6-5-65, p. 6, "Korea Readying Troop"
- p.83 9 N39 New York Times, 6-6-65, "The World: Vietnam Pressures"
- p.83 10 N40 New York Times, 5-2-65, p. 1, "U. S. Forces In Vietnam
11 May Rise To 6,000 In June"

Gen. Johnson Trip Rep.

Info:

GPO IV.C.4., 16 EP111,403,428
GPO IV.C.5., 13 BPIII,405

"Administration Steps Up Pressure to Force End of Aid to Guerillas" Max Frankel (Washington) 15 Mar65

"Despite reports from Saigon that General Johnson, among others, favored the assignment of large numbers of US combat troops to SVN - possibly as many as a division of more than 15,000 men - there was no sign that the Administration was prepared to endorse such a move now ... Asked whether more troops were being prepared for Vietnam duty, General Johnson said, 'no specific combat forces at this stage'."

ed: statement further confirms the position favored by General Johnson put before LBJ in his 14Mar65 "Report on Trip to SVN" (EP111,403,428). Statement correctly speculates (?) that the General Johnson proposal to deploy a Division to SVN was in fact deferred by LBJ (EP111,405, 428).

J,72/EF/GW

✓ NYT 1/16Mar65

Gen. Johnson Trip Report

Info, LK

GPO IV.C.4., xv, 16 EP111,403,428

"US Army Division is Expected to Go to SVN" Jack Langguth (Saigon) 12Mar65

"Authoritative sources said today that recommendations by US officials in Saigon would probably lead to the stationing of a US Army Division in SVN for defensive security (as a result of week long discussions with Army Chief, General Johnson)... Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut, air bases are two of the chief installations where greater guard forces would be stationed, the sources said."

ed: This view from Saigon was formally put to LBJ two days later, 14Mar65, by General Johnson in his "Report on Trip to SVN" (EP111, 403,428). And, yes indeed, Johnson proposed deploying a US Division either to defend Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut air bases plus some coastal enclaves or to defend the highland provinces.

J,72/EF/GW

✓ NYT 1/18Mar/65

U.S. cuts aid to F.E.C.

Following the third day of the NATO council meeting Ely said "It was understood that the two Western Powers had agreed to reduce the Vietnam army from about 100,000 to 90,000 while the French Expeditionary force would gradually be withdrawn. The official U.S. position is that the ~~MYXX~~ Vietnamese army should serve for internal security and any new aggression should be met by the recent Manila agreement to safeguard Southeast Asia."

As to Ely "...He was concerned chiefly about reinforcement of the Vietminh troops and their receipt of Chinese arms, but he was not sure the reinforcements had followed the armistice or how great the arms were."

JMT 2/4/72

NYT Dec. 20, 1954 1:8

Taylor EMBTEL 3003

Info GPO IV.C.5.,14,56 EP111,406,445

"War-Gas Debate Stirs Commons" Clyde Farnsworth (London) 23Mar65

"A dispatch from Saigon to The Daily Telegraph reported that Mr. Taylor had said that there was no limit to the potential increase of the war in Vietnam and that America might directly enter the ground fighting."

ed: statement cannot be verified. However, Taylor was definitely aware (and perhaps fearful) that America just might enter the ground fighting. On 18Mar65, Taylor cabled Washington, EMBTEL 3003 (EP111, 406,445) and discussed the pros and cons of introducing a Division into SVN as discussed with General Johnson during his recent visit. The purpose, as Taylor saw it, "would be to relieve the present shortage of ARVN in the defense of key installations or by engaging in active operations against the VC in conjunction with ARVN."

J,72/EF/GNU

✓ NYT 6/24Mar65

EMBTEL 3003

Info

Sum. GPO IV.C.5.,14,56,67 BP111,406,445,453

"'Decisive Point' Seen" (Saigon) 22Mar65

"...Taylor said tonight (in a speech to the Lion's Club) the war in Vietnam might be approaching a 'decisive point'."

ed: Taylor pressure! Too bad Taylor didn't elaborate (maybe he did and it wasn't reported ... should get a copy of the speech). Four days before, 18Mar65, Taylor cabled Washington, EMBTEL 3003, (BP111 406, 445) and said, "We will soon have to decide whether to try to get by with inadequate indigenous forces or to supplement them with 3rd Country troops, largely if not exclusively US." The PA says Taylor received no response to this cable and, on 27Mar65, sent another one in which he reminded Washington that it was high time to make some decisions concerning US strategy in Vietnam. (BP111,453).

J,72/EF/GNU

✓ NYT 4/23Mar65

Taylor EMBTEL 3120

Dec GPO IV.C.5.,15,67 BP111,407,453

"US Attacks Deep in NVN" Jack Langguth (Saigon) 26Mar65

"Informed sources reported ... that ... Taylor, who leaves tomorrow to report to LBJ would urge a continuation and an extension of the strikes against the North."

ed: statement is correct as far as it goes. Taylor had several weeks before expressed dissatisfaction with the tempo of the air campaign against NVN (See BP111,335). The sources did not mention, however that Tay Lor's main interest was to secure a decision on future US strategy in Vietnam; especially, further troop deployments and their mission as evidenced by EMBTEL 3120 dated 27Mar65 (BP111,407,453).

J,72/EF/GNU

✓ NYT 1/27Mar65

17Mar65 VC Order of Battle

Tafel
GPO IV.C.5.,13,51 BP111,406,441

"VC Forming Bigger Units, Hinting War is Near '3rd Phase'" Hanson Baldwin

(Baldwin says, according to information reaching Washington, VC have organized 5 regimental commands, each with 3 battalions and, in addition, the VC main force appears to consist of 30 more battalions and numerous local forces.)

ed: Baldwin's data coincides in part with the VC Order of Battle as reported in a joint CIA, DIA, State memo dated 17Mar65 (EP111,406,441).

J,72/EF/GNU

✓ NYT 6/2Apr65

Mac Bundy Memo to LBJ

Info.
GPO IV.C.4.,ix BP111,399
L/GPO IV.C.5.,54 BPIII,443

"The Importance of Being Bundy" Max Frankel, NYT Magazine, 28Mar65

"There is never any certain knowledge of whose counsel ultimately tips a crucial Presidential decision, but the impression in Washington is that (Mac) Bundy, as much as anyone, helped to conceive and promote the program of restrained attacks upon NVN as a way of preventing the collapse of SVN."

ed: A similar impression is registered by the PA account of events and factors influencing LBJ's decision to bomb (See Bantam 389-390 for summary). Emphasis is placed on what one PA calls an "apparently pivotal" (EP111,443) Memo to the President written by Mac Bundy on 7Feb65 (EP111,399). This memo was a unique articulation of a rationale for a policy of sustained, restrained reprisal, and could very well have been the straw that broke the camel's (LBJ) back... and Mac Bundy the straw man.

J,72/EF/GNU

✓ NYT VI.32/28Mar65

CIA/DIA 21Apr65

Info GPO IV.C.5.,22,46 BP111,410,438
Summary

"Hanoi's Goal: One Vietnam" Seymour Topping (Saigon) 10Apr65

"In the central highlands (of SVN) according to US intelligence reports, there is evidence that units of a regular NVN Division have infiltrated through Laos in recent months."

ed: statement correctly reveals latest intelligence estimates on enemy strength. According to the PA, "... a CIA-DIA memo dated 21Apr65 reflected the acceptance into the enemy order of battle one regiment of the 325th PAVN Division ... The presence of this regular NVN unit ... had been first reported as early as February ..." (BP111,410,438)

J,72/EF/GMU

✓ NYT IV,5/11Apr 65

Info

GPO IV.C.5.,41 BP111,434

"US Plans Step-up in Troops and Aid for Vietnam War" John Finney (Washington) 2Apr65

(Taylor, at a news conference called by LBJ after the NSC meeting said he was "very much encouraged" by the new government of Premier Quat and expressed the hope that SVN was "moving into a period of much greater governmental effectiveness."

ed: Taylor's public optimism regarding the Quat Government apparently sincerely felt in private. The PA says, "(Quat) impressed Taylor with his businesslike approach, and the latter had high hopes for Quat's success." (BP111,434).

J,72/EF/GMU

✓ NYT 1/3Apr65

NSAM 328
Taylor Cable, CINCPAC 042058Z

LK GPO IV.C.5., 4 EP Doc. 254
GPO IV.C.5., 17, 59 EP111, 408, 448
GPO IV.C.5., 69 BP111, 455

"Marine Jets Join Vietnam Build-up" (UPI) (Danang) 10Apr65

"Authoritative sources in Saigon said it was likely that the Marines would add more aggressive patrolling to their normal defense of the base (Danang), on the theory that 'offense is the best defense.' The sources said it was also probable that the Marines would eventually undertake heliborne infantry attacks on any VC concentrations around their area of responsibility."

ed: Authoritative sources reveal, against LBJ's wishes (?), the change of mission for Marines deployed in SVN (See NSAM 328). Taylor, on 4Apr65, CINCPAC 042058Z, proposed to seek GVN concurrence by describing the new mission "as the use of Marines in a mobile counter-insurgency role (near Danang for security and) as a reserve in support of ARVN ... anywhere within 50 miles of the base." (BP111, 408, 448). GVN concurrence in the mission change came on 8Apr65 (EP111, 455) bringing up the possibility that the authoritative source was SVNese.

(1 of 2)

J, 72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 4/11Apr65

I info.
GPO IV.C.5., 42, 44 EP111, 434, 436

"Air Strikes Spur Saigon Morale" Jack Langguth (Saigon) 6 Apr. 65

(MACV spokesman presents March review; reports air strikes against NVN have improved ARVN morale and effectiveness; cites recent ARVN successes in battle; reports the ratio of weapons lost to weapons captured and ratio of fatalities much improved compared to February.)

ed: MACV public report of the encouraging military situation in general agreement with private reports. See PA account (EP111, 434) and selected excerpts from MACV Monthly Evaluations for March (EP111, 436, 443).

J, 72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/7Apr65

Int GPO IV.C.5.,16-20 BP111,408-
Sum.

"UPI Clients Are Told Parleys on Vietnam Offer Best Way Out"

"'Preparations are now being made'... (Stewart Hensley, UPI Washington Bureau Chief, said), 'to introduce US combat forces on a very large scale' if and when it seemed advisable."

ed: Stewart Hensley was hip! See early-April Chronology (BP111,408-40 PA account of early-April events (BP111,351), and Taylor's EMBTEL for ready proof.

J,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 27/20Apr

CIA/DIA 21Apr65 Memo

I GPO IV.C.5.,22,46 BP111,410,438
Sum.

"Air Attacks in SVN Hurting Morale of VC" Seymour Topping (Saigon) 14Apr65

"Seeding (air-dropped delayed-action bombs) has been carried out extensively recently in the central highlands (of SVN), where units of the regular 325th NVN Division may be infiltrated."

ed: First time "325th NVN Division" appears in the NYT. A week later, a CIA-DIA memo dated 21Apr65, lists a regiment of the "325th PAVN Division" in the enemy Order of Battle. The presence of this unit was known or suspected by intelligence as early as February 65 (BP111,410,438).

J,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 3/15Apr

GPO IV.C.5.,21,70-78
GPO IV.C.5.,80

EP111, 455-6-7
EP111,459

in principal was a joint State/Defense 7-Point Plan that apparently served as the basis for the Honolulu discussions (See EP111,455-6). By the by, the final approved program was not too far removed from the 7-Point Plan. Baldwin's description of the intended evolution of the US combat role from static defense to active defense to active offense coincides nicely with Westy's 3 stages outlined on 8 May 65 (EP111,459). Presumably, this evolution was discussed by the Honolulu conferees in the context of their "victory strategy," that is, counter-insurgency combat operations conducted by US troops operating from enclaves in order to deny victory to the enemy, or at least, demonstrate enemy impotence. In sum, and this is tentative, Baldwin's article appears to reflect the military (JCS-Westy) side of the Honolulu conference.

(2 of 2)

J,72/EF/GWU

NYT 3/21Apr/65

Info. GPO IV.C.5.,21,70-78

EP111,455-6-7
EP111,459

"Build-up Reported Planned" Hanson Baldwin (no date line)

(Baldwin reports that plans for a major build-up of US ground forces, possibly several divisions, were discussed by Honolulu conferees, says program already approved in principle by LBJ, and therefore, details and timing were main consideration. Baldwin says the program calls for the deployment of the rest of the 3rd Marine Division and one or more Army Divisions. Also, according to Baldwin, the mission of US combat units would initially be one of static perimeter defense, followed by an active defense - patrolling beyond the perimeter, and eventually an active offense helping the ARVN seek out and defeat the VC.)

ed: Baldwin is correct when he says that the Honolulu conferees discussed plans for a major US troop build-up - a fact not revealed by McNamara in a post-conference news briefing. Moreover, the conferees focussed on details and timing of such plans (See EP111,456). The program that was agreed upon was somewhat less than the full Marine Division and one or more Army Divisions although they were mentioned for possible later deployment (Again See EP111,456). What LBJ actually approved

(1 of 2)

J,72/EF/GWU

NYT 3/21Apr65

"Hanoi Troop Unit Fighting in South" (UPI) (Saigon) 26Apr65

"US and SVNese spokesmen confirmed for the first time today that a regular unit of the NVNA was fighting in SVN. The unit was identified as the 2nd Battalion of the 101st Regiment of the 325th Battalion. 'We have enough evidence of the battalion's presence to pass it from the "probable" to the "confirmed" category,' a spokesman for the US Embassy said."

ed: statement reveals latest intelligence estimate contained in a CIA-DIA memo dated 21Apr65. The memo listed, for the first time, a regiment of the 325th PAVN Division in the enemy Order of Battle. The presence of this unit was known or suspected by intelligence as early as February 65 (BP111,410,438).

J,72/EF/GWU

NYT 1/26Apr65

Taylor EMBTEL 2391

Info.

GPO IV.C.5.,22,80
GPO IV.C.5.,21,77BP111,411,459
BP111,456

"Taylor Discusses Build-up" Jack Langguth (saigon) 24Apr65

"Taylor is conferring with (Premier Quat today) about a US plan to bring as many as 5000 more US servicemen to SVN within the next 60 days... Informed sources said (Taylor) was proceeding cautiously with the proposal because Quat had shown himself sensitive ... about the growing US presence in his country and because, while an increase was approved at the recent Honolulu conference ... it is still subject to review by LBJ."

review)

ed: Informed sources reveal the intended topic of the Taylor-Quat meeting. Apparently, as Taylor cabled home, EMBTEL 2391 (BP111,411), Quat was extremely reluctant to discuss foreign reinforcements (BP111,459). Sources reveal Taylor's sensitivity to the xenophobic and other proclivities of Quat discussed by the PA (BP111,455,459). In addition, the sources reveal the decision reached at Honolulu by the Principals to increase troops, reveal details (60-day time frame correct, however, many more than 5000 troops were approved). (BP111,456 and EP Doc.256.)

J,72/EF/GWU

NYT 4/25Apr65

Info.
Sum.

GPO IV.C.5.,59 BP111,447

"Marines Lifted from Base" (Reuters) (Saigon) 3 May 65

(Two hundred US Marines were lifted by helicopter to an area SW of Danang on a "search and destroy patrol"). "The Marines are officially occupying 'static' defensive positions around Danang, but in practice they have been extending patrols into the countryside farther and farther each week."

ed: The PA says : "... the change of mission (for Marines in SVN authorized in NSAM 328) was not publicized until it crept out almost by accident in a State Department release on June 8" (BP111,447). I guess he means not officially publicized within the US.

J,72/EF/GWJ

✓ NYT 3/4 May 65

MACV April 65 Evaluation

GPO IV.C.5.,44,53
GPO IV.C.%,42

BP111,436,443
BP111,434

"9000 US Troops Land in Vietnam" Emerson Chapin (Saigon) 7 May 65

(US military authorities paint an impressive, optimistic picture of continuing military success for the month of April. Spokesman says ARVN has retained the initiative; presents stock indices noting favorable trends in ARVN effectiveness and continued lull in VC activity.)

ed: statement mirrors internal optimism as evidenced by excerpts from the MACV Monthly Evaluation for April (BP111,436,443) and the PA's assessment of the military situation in SVN for March, April 1965 (BP111,434).

J,72/EF/GWJ

NYT 3/7 May 65

Info.
LK

GPO IV.C.5.,5,6

BP111,394

"US May Modify Vietnam Tactics" Hanson Baldwin (no dateline)

(Baldwin reports of US plans, part of which ^{were} ~~is~~ already being implemented, to use US ground troops in offensive operations in an "inkblot" strategy to secure and gradually expand coastal enclaves. Baldwin further reports that US combat troops, now assigned to 5 enclaves, might be airlifted to any part of the country to aid ARVN against the VC if a crisis should develop, says conservative military officers would prefer to establish secure enclaves first, however.)

ed: Baldwin's article in total is a near perfect description of enclave strategy formalized at the April Honolulu Conference (See BP111,394). And note, this strategy involving US troops in counter-insurgency combat operations against the VC, albeit small scale, was not officially announced by the USG at the time of Baldwin's article.

J,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/19 May 65

Info LK

GPO IV.C.5.,83

BP111,461

"US Forces in Vietnam May Rise to 60,000 in June" Jack Langguth (Saigon)
23 May 65

"Plans are well under way to bring the equivalent of a US Army combat division into Vietnam next month informed sources in the American mission said today... The sources said that manpower plans were still being reviewed and that an equivalent number of combat troops might be used rather than an existing division... If the plan is executed, the number of troops in Vietnam would be brought to more than 60,000."

ed: Sources reveal approved deployments which, when closed, would bring the total combat strength to more than 60,000 ... approximately 70,000 (BP111,461).

J,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/24 May 65

Info.
Sum.

GPO IV.C.4.,11 EP111,425

"Kontum Is Awaiting Expected VC Assault" Jack Langguth (Kontum) 28May65

"Intelligence information has warned for months that, when the SW monsoon season begins, the VC plan to seize a provincial capital, preferably Kontum ... the town marked as their future capital in SVN."

ed: statement mirrors PA statement (BP111,425), "Intelligence estimates began stating that the coming rainy season would be accompanied by a major VC attempt to cut the country in half in the II Corps. It was quite possible that the VC would attempt during such a campaign to seize complete control of one of the highland provinces, most probably Kontum, and would then proceed to set up a NLF government therein."

J,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 9/30May65

Info.
Sum.

GPO IV.C.5.,83 BP 111,462

"The News of the Week in Review" 6Jun65

"... reports are that the goal is a force exceeding 100,000."

ed: statement is not too far off. The State of the Build-up on 7Jun65 was approximately 45,000 men in-country with another 30,000 or so approved for deployment and, if the additional forces (US/3rd Country) then being discussed were thrown in, the total would have been about 134,000 men (BP111,462).

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT IV 1/6Jun65

4-2-0 LK

GPO IV 1.5.,21,71-78. BP DOC.
GPO IV.C.5.,114 BPIII,4

"Full Combat Role for GIs Is Likely Soon" Jack Langguth (Saigon) 17May65

"To meet the expected Communist military offensive in SVN, American commanders here are preparing to send US combat troops now on guard duty at the airbases, into battle anywhere in Vietnam ... Their use has been dictated by the serious shortage of (ARVN)... As much as possible the US military strategists want to keep the US paratroopers and marines out of areas heavily populated with civilian

ed: Langguth article appears to represent Westmoreland advocacy as much as it does US policy. As the record of April Honolulu Conference reveals (BP Doc.254) all concerned were convinced that ARVN could not alone meet the expected summer offensive and that US troops were required to stem the tide. US troops were visualized in a limited counter-insurgency combat role operating from coastal enclaves. As the PA puts it, "the enemy would be denied victory simply because a modicum of US and 3rd Country force would enable ARVN to be expanded at a controlled rate without undue risk of collapse, loss of a key area, or a major defeat. The brunt of the war against the enemy's regular units would still be borne by the ARVN." (BP111,479)

J,72/EF/GWU

(1 of 2)

CR-29B

✓ NYT 1/18May65

Info.
Sum.

GPO IV.C.5.,83 BP111,462

"Korea Readyng Troops" (SNYT) (Seoul) 4Jun65

"A high official of the Defense Ministry said today that preparations were under way, despite official denials, to send 15,000 South Korean combat troops to SVN this summer. The official, who declines to be identified, said a small advance group will leave for Saigon before the end of June."

ed: high official reveals SK preparations for sending a large contingent of SK troops to SVN. PA says large SK deployment was "in the talking stages" (BP111,462).

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 6/5Jun65

EMBTEL 4074

Info.

LK

GPO IV.C.5..

BP111,413

GPO IV.C.5.,25,47,90 BPIII,413,438,467

"US Officer Sees GI Combat Role Soon" Jack Langguth (Saigon) NYT 1/5Jun65

"A senior American Officer, reviewing setbacks suffered in the last week by (GVN) forces predicted today that US combat troops would enter the Vietnamese war this summer."

ed: statement content coincides with content of EMBTEL 4074 dated same day 5Jun65 (EP111,413). According to the PA EMBTEL 4074 said: "Mission Intelligence Committee with concurrence of Taylor, Johnson, and Westmoreland told State that a series of recent ARVN defeats raised the possibility of collapse. To meet a shortage of ARVN reserves, US ground troops would probably have to be committed to action."

Two days later, Westy (senior American officer?) told CINCPAC essentially the same thing (BPIII,413,438,467).

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/5Jun65

GPO IV.C.5.,15,84
GPO IV.C.5.,27,104

BPOIII,406,462
BPIII,414,471

Westy was definitely anti-enclavist and apparently had no qualms over the US assuming the brunt of the war anywhere in SVN as first evidenced by his Commanders Estimate of the Situation in SVN dated 25Mar65 (EP111,406,462). Three weeks after the Langguth article Westy, in a message to CINCPAC, MACV 131515 (EP111,414,471), spelled out the concept of keeping US forces away from the people and made a big pitch for a free hand to maneuver troops around inside the country. Both ideas are brought out in the Langguth article.

28.28 A

(2 of 2)

J,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 2/18May/65

Info.

Sum. GPO IV.C.5.,82

BP111,461

"Il-28s Stir US Concern" (SNYT) (Washington) NYT6/4Jun65

"The State Department declined any immediate comment on reports from Saigon quoting a senior American official as predicting that combat troops would enter the Vietnamese war this summer. Privately, however, Administration sources were suggesting that it was only a matter of time - perhaps days or weeks - before some American troops were committed to direct combat against the VC."

ed: Sources clairvoyant? The first major ground combat operation by US forces in the Vietnam war took place about 3 weeks later (BP111,461).

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 6/5 Jun65

Info.

Sum. GPO IV.C.5.,27,

BP111,414,476

GPO IV.C.5.,83,110

BPIII,461

"Portions of 3 US Divisions Reported Going to Vietnam" (SNYT) (Washington) 14Jun65

"Rumours circulated in the Pentagon today that contingents of 3 Army divisions were being alerted for probable assignment to Vietnam. The divisions are the 1st Infantry based at Fort Riley, Kansas; the 11th Airborne at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the 25th Infantry at Hawaii."

ed: Rumours not unfounded! McNamara gave the green light for planning to deploy the Army Airmobile Division (using the assets of the 11th Airborne) to SVN by 1Sep65 (BP111,414,476). A 1st Infantry Division contingent had been approved for deployment since at least the 1st of June (BP111,461).

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/15Jun65

MACV 15182
EMBTTEL 3855
MACV 17292

Info GPO IV.C.5.,
Sum GPO IV.C.5.,25
GPO IV.C.5.,25,80

BP111,411,459
BP111,412
BP111,412

"Issue of Vietnam Command Re-examined as US Role Widens" Jack Raymond (Saigon)
18Jun65

(Article points up GVN sensitivities to a joint US/GVN military command; says US/GVN troop control is to be "co-ordinated" not unified; indicates solution being considered is the establishment of US commands in each Corps paralleling the existing SVN structure with Westy in charge overall.)

ed: Article mirrors views held by Taylor and Westy. Westy, with Taylor's concurrence proposed (first time?) a coordinated command structure on 8May65 in MACV 15182 (BP111,411,459). On 24May65, Taylor in EMBTEL 3855 (BP111,412) and Westy in MACV 17292 (BP111,412) both reiterated their view that the SVNese were repulsed at (cool to) the idea of a joint US/GVN military command.

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 16/20Jun65

JCSI 457-65
JCSI 482-65

Info
LK

GPO IV.C.5.,26 BP111,413
GPO IV.C.5.,28 BP111,414

"Dirksen Says US May Soon Double Force in Vietnam" Max Frankel (Washington)
24Jun65

(Dirksen, in a statement to the press, suggests US may soon double forces in SVN to presumably at least 120,000.)

ed: Dirksen reveals then current JCS recommended force levels: 116,793 in JCSI 457-65 dated 11Jun65 (BP111,413) and 120,839 in JCSI 482-65 dated 18Jun65 (BP111,414).

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/25Jun65

JCSM 451-65
JCSM 482-65

Info.
Sum.

GPO IV.C.5.,26 BP111,413
GPO IV.C.5.,28 BP111,414

"Arms Budget Rise Urged By Stennis" Max Frankel (Washington) 25Jun65

"Administration officials said that they knew of no decision to double the American force, which was suggested yesterday by ... Dirksen. But an increase past the announced goal of 75,000 men was acknowledged with some sources hinting at a figure near 100,000. Mr. Dirksen said he had received no complaints from the executive branch for signalling a further US involvement. He said he thought his disclosure had been right down (LBJ's) 'alley' because he was merely 'warning the country that there are going to be more men out there.'"

ed: Administration officials could be correct, no decision appears to have been made at the Presidential level; probably knew of military recommendations however (See JCSM 457-65, JCSM 482-65). At any rate "some sources" confirm the fact that US forces would be increased beyond the announced level, though disagreeing with Dirksen figure of 120,000.

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 4/26Jun65

Info.
Sum.

GPO IV.C.5.,49 BP111,440

AMBUSH! Jack Langguth (Saigon)

(Article on VC successes with ambushes and attempts to counter them. Article describes in detail the battle of Dong Xoai, the largest and most disastrous ambush of the war to date; lays lack of ARVN success to their practice of committing relief forces piecemeal to battle.)

ed: Article main points treated in summary fashion by PA (BP111,440).

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT VI,4/27Jun65

Info.

GPO IV.C 5., 82

BP111,461

Sum

"US Troops Open First Big Attack Against VC" (SNYT) Saigon 29Jun65

(US troops drop defensive and boyscout role, first time, join SVN troops for offensive in Zone D. Offensive began 2 days before, reports withheld on Westy request.)

F,72/EF/GNU

✓ NYT 1/30Jun65

Info.

GPO IV.C.5., 31

BP111,416

Sum

GPO IV.C.5., 110, 112

BP111,476,478

"Vast Building Program Started in Vietnam to Handle US Reinforcements" Jack Raymond (Saigon) 3Jul65

"Elements of the 101st Airborne Division are expected. The 1st Infantry Division is expected to supply one or two brigades ... One of the Army outfits due in Vietnam will be assigned to protect Quin hon.."

ed: Raymond hip to officially unannounced deployment plans! 1st Infantry Division (2nd Brigade) arrived in SVN 12Jul65. 101st Airborne Division (1st Brigade) arrived in SVN 29Jul65 (BP111,416). Neither Division went to protect Quin hon (BP111,478). Instead, that task went to the Marines on 23Jun65 permitting Westy to divert elsewhere the Army brigade originally scheduled to protect Quin hon (BP111,476). Raymond apparently picked up on the original plan.

F,72/EF/GNU

✓ NYT 6/4Jul65

(Graff interviews the Principals (LBJ, McNamara, Rusk, Bill and Mac Bundy) during the "momentous days in the second week of June when decisions were being taken to enlarge the US commitment of ground forces in SVN." (LBJ informs Graff of a Westmoreland report on force recommendations he is to study over the weekend.)

ed: A quick glance at the chronology for the second week of June (BP111, 413) should leave no doubt that decisions were being taken to enlarge the US ground force commitment. The report referred to is none other than Westy's 35 battalion request doubling the troop commitment, dated 7Jun65, MACV 19118 (BP111,413,467).

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT IV.4/4Jul65

MACV 3320
JCSM 515-65

Info GP0 IV.C.5.,28,117 BP111,415,481
LK GP0 IV.C.5.,30,117 BP111,415,481

"Vast Building Program Started in Vietnam to Handle US Reinforcements" Jack Raymond (Saigon) 3Jul65

"Forecasts are not available officially, but there is talk of a force of 250,000 Americans to be committed in the war against the Communists."

ed: Good possibility that the "talk" came from Westy and/or the JCS. At this time the 44 battalion-Phase I. debate was unresolved. A force of 44 battalions (34 US/10 3rd Country) meant at this point some 175-194,000 US men, later jumped to 219,000. Thus, someone talking of 250,000 US men would have to be thinking beyond Phase I. Both Westy and the JCS, in MACV 3320 and JCSM 515-65 (BP111,415,481) respectively, are on record, stating that 44 battalions would not be enough to seize the initiative, thus substantial increases of forces would be required over and above the 44 battalions in 1966.

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT 6/4Jul65

Info.
LK

GPO IV.C.5.,51 BP111,441

"US Combat Units in Vietnam Spurt" Hanson Baldwin (no dateline)

(Baldwin discusses force strengths and ratios; says 10 to 1 perhaps 20 to 1 needed for victory; says today the ratio of SVN regular and paramilitary outnumber the full-time and part-time communists by less than 4 to 1; says VC hardcore strength at 65,000, VC irregulars number 100,000; says SVN regular and paramilitary number between 574,000 and 600,000 men)

ed: Baldwin's data in good agreement with that presented by the PA (BP111,441).

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT 3/11Jul65

MACV 19118

Info. GPO IV.C.5.,25,47-49 BP111,413,438
GPO IV.C.5.,50 BP111,441
LK

"US Combat Units in Vietnam Spurt" Hanson Baldwin (no dateline)

(Baldwin discusses ARVN defeats and weaknesses in the ARVN expansion program; says the ARVN build-up hoped for by the US has not materialized, thus a far larger and more rapid US commitment is required to prevent defeat during the upcoming VC monsoon offensive; says ARVN expansion program is not expected to yield any major results until the end of the year.)

ed: Baldwin covers the main points contained in Westy's pivotal message, MACV 19118, dated 2Jun65 (BP111,413,438) and the PA's discussion of such (BP111,441).

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT 3/11Jul65

IGPO² IV.C.5.,27,28,31 BP111,414,415,416
LK.

"Limited Reserve Call-up to Support Vietnam Seen" Hanson Baldwin (No dateline)

"The First Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) at Fort Benning, Ga., is tentatively earmarked for movement later this year."

ed: Baldwin aware of unannounced programmed unit deployment. On 15Jun65 McNamara gave the green light for planning to deploy the Air Mobile Division by 1Sep65 (BP111,414). On 26Jun65, Army Secretary Resor told McNamara that the Air Mobile Division must have its movement directive by 8Jul65 at the latest. .. Security would be impossible after issuing the directive (BP111,415). Official announcement came on 28Jul65 (BP111,416).

Looks like Resor was right!

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/12Jul65

MACV 19118

Info GPO IV.C.5.,25,48 BP111,413,438
Sum.

"US Combat Units in Vietnam Spurt" Hanson Baldwin (no dateline)

"At least all or the better part of two regular NVNA divisions, the 325th and the 304th, are now known to be in SVN, and a third is believed to be across the border in Laos."

ed: Back on 7Jun65 Westy, in his pivotal message MACV 19118, said "elements of the 304th ... Division are suspected to be in panhandle and, therefore, capable of following the 325th ... Whether or not the 304th Division is in, or moving toward SVN, the DRV has a 'doorstep' capability to reinforce the VC..."

Wow, Hanson! Them NVNA Divisions sure do move fast!

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 3/11Jul65

JCSM 428-65

Info.

GPO IV.C.5.,28 BP111,414

Sum.

"Limited Reserve Call-up to Support Vietnam Seen" Hanson Baldwin
(no dateline)

"In fact, officers say, forces already in Vietnam, plus those on the way or programmed, would bring the total of US ground troops in SVN to somewhere between 100,000 and 150,000."

ed: How about 120,839 of them as recommended by the JCS on 18Jun65.
JCSM 482-65 (BP111,414).

F,72/EF/GWU

✓ NYT 1/12/65

Info GPO IV.C.5.,8,114 BP111,396,479

Sum.

"Americans Called Ready to Assume Main Burden of War on VC" Jack
Raymond 11Jul65

"... it is known that (Taylor) was less convinced than (Westy) and other military men of the need for a larger combat role."

ed: statement similar to PA statement. "The difference between Westy and Taylor was the former's insistence on using US/3rd Country forces to take the war to the enemy. Taylor was quite content to let the enemy do that with occasional assist from allied forces if they got into difficulty." (BP111,479). See BP111,386 for further PA comment on Taylor's views.

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT 1/12/65

MACV 19118

Info. GPO IV.C.5.,25, ,90 BP111,413,438,467
Sum.

"Americans Called Ready to Assume Main Burden of War on VC" Jack Raymond
11Jul65

"The change from what is still ostensibly the advisory and supporting role of the US forces to outright offensive operations on a wide scale is not expected to be announced as an assumption of responsibility for the war ... But US troops ... will be sent out, the sources here say, to 'meet and defeat' the (enemy)... The reasoning behind the US assumption of combat responsibilities on the ground is based on a combination of factors, including the apparent ineffectuality of the (ARVN), the growing strength of the VC, and the belief that there is no other way to save the country."

ed: Raymond's "reasoning" behind the need for the search-and-destroy (meet-and-defeat) strategy same as Westy's . See MACV 19118 (BP111, 413,438,467). By the by, the force levels required for the US to begin to assume the main burden of the war were not as yet approved.

w/
F,72/EF/GEU

/ NYT 1/12Jul65

MACV 131515Z

Info.
Sum.

GPO IV.C.5.,27 BP11,414
GPO IV.C.5.,7,104 BP111,395,471

"Americans Called Ready to Assume Main Burden of War on VC" Jack Raymond
11Jul65

"As US forces clash with the main bodies of the Communists troops, the SVIese will be given the task of pacifying the country - that is, routing out guerrillas, re-establishing governmental authority in villages and towns, and providing security in remote areas."

ed: statement reflects Westy's ideas spelled out in MACV 131515Z (EP111,414) on 13Jun65. See FA comment (BP111,395,471).

F,72/EF/GEU

/ NYT 2/12Jul65

JCS: 590-65

JN-50.

LK.

GPO IV.C.5.,31 EP111,416

"Build-up in Vietnam" NYT Editor 21Jul65

"Public thinking is being prepared for a build-up of American military strength in Vietnam to something in the neighborhood of 200,000 men, and there is no certainty that even that will prove enough."

ed: A week later the JCS recommend a total US strength of 194,000!

F,72/EF/GW

NYT 36/21Jul65

NMCC 172047Z

GPO IV.C.5.,31 EP111,416

"US Command in Saigon Backs Increase in Troops" Jack Raymond (Saigon) 17Jul65

"The US MACV recommended today an increase in US combat forces fighting the Communists... The GVN made a similar request yesterday... The disclosure of the recommendations at a top-secret military session was as usual as yesterday's disclosure of the GVN recommendation in advance of LBJ's decision."

ed: Unusual disclosure? Yes! Guess why? LBJ's decision had already been made! See NMCC 172047Z dated 17Jul65 (EP111,416). Speculation: good possibility that LBJ's decision hung on public GVN concurrence secured by McNamara et al the day before.

F,72/EF/GW

NYT 1 /16Jul65

JCSM 590-65
Westy's Concept of Operations

GPO IV.C.5.,31
GPO IV.C.5.,117-118
Sum

BP111,415
BP11,482

"Saigon Sees Big Build-up" Jack Langguth (Saigon) 21Jul65

"American officials in Saigon assert that a final decision rests entirely with (LBJ) but some of them talk of 200,000 US troops in Vietnam shortly after the beginning of 1966."

ed: American officials indirectly reveal then current plans for Westy's Phase I - 44 US/3rd Country battalions by the end of 1965 (BP111,482). US troop strength under the 44 battalion plan was then set at roughly 194,000 as evidenced by JCSM590-65 (BP111,416).

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT 4/22Jul65

JCSM 515-65
JCSM 590-65

Info.
Sum

GPO IV.C.5.,30
GPO IV.C.5.,31
BP111,415
BP111,416

"Shortage of Arms and Men Plagues Army and Reserve" Hanson Baldwin (no dateline)

(Baldwin details various plans contemplating different types of reserve call-ups being worked on by the Pentagon and Services; notes Pentagon and Congressional sources say planners use rough estimate of 150,000-200,000 US troops as SVN requirement)

ed: "planners rough-estimate" of 150,000-200,000 encompasses total US strength figures of 175,000-194,000 recommended by the JCS during July. See JCSM 515-65 dated 2Jul65 (BP111,415) and JCSM 590-65 dated 30Jul65 (BP111,416).

F,72/EF/GWU

NYT 1/21Jul65

MACV 19118

Info.

Sum.

GPO IV.C.5.,25,47-49,90
BP111,413,438,467

"The News of the Week in Review" Build-up 25Jul65

"The need for build-up is predicated not only on the increase in Communist strength and operations, but also on a feeling in Saigon and Washington that the SVN forces, after years of war, no longer have the physical capacity or will to win a decisive struggle against the reinforced VC."

ed: Westy saw it the same way! See MACV 19118.

F,71/EF/GWJ

NYT IV,1/25Jul65

Memo To Len Weinglass
From Sam Hurst

Volume IV.C.5 Phase I of the Build-up

In late June, 1965, the Quat government fell to a military coup. At least part of the reason, aside from the perpetual instability of any South Vietnamese government, was that Quat was beginning to resist the escalation of American troops.

A cable from Ambassador Taylor reveals Quat's suspicion,

Ambassador Taylor indicated that 3 divisions seemed high; that Quat was not persuaded that more troops were necessary; that anti-American sentiment lies just below the surface and that finally there are two very real limitations on the number and rate of introduction of US and Third Country forces. First, is the absorptive capacity of the country and second logistical limitations. (106)

Regardless of the motivation behind the coup, by June Nguyen Van Thieu had been installed by the National Leadership Committee as head of State and Nguyen Cao Ky as Prime Minister. The analyst records at this juncture, "The accession of Thieu/Ky ended for the moment any hopes of Ambassador Taylor and others for the establishment of an effective civilian government in Vietnam." (42)

The last vestige of resistance within the South Vietnamese government to the intervention of US ground troops was consequently eliminated.

Coupled with the transference from civilian to military authority, the economy of South Vietnam continued its spiral toward US domination, tottering on the verge of collapse.

By the end of 1965 the retail price indices showed that for middle and working class families in Saigon the cost of food was 41% higher than a year earlier. The general price index, not including rent, for working class families was 33% higher and for the middle class families 30% higher. (55)

To round out the picture during the first six months of 1965, there was a military lull. In the absence of major battles, and Westmoreland's conclusion that the recently initiated Rolling Thunder air strikes would not have a military effect for at least six months, it was concluded that the NLF was in the process of regrouping and recruiting.

"The consensus of their meeting (Honolulu, April 1965) was that the then present level of VC activity was nothing but a lull before the storm." (46)

When the lull finally broke, intelligence reports were vindicated. In a battle in May at Ba Gia,

Two battalions (ARVN) were completely decimated and, what was worse, the ARVN senior commanders on the scene had displayed tactical stupidity and cowardice in the face of large enemy forces. From Ba Gia came a sense of urgency, at least among some of the senior US officers who had been witness to the battle. The very real possibility of ARVN collapse had been made manifest. (47)

On June 7, after Ba Gia, Westmoreland cabled CINCPAC the following information.

In most engagements, VC main force units have displayed improved training and discipline. (48)

ARVN Forces on the other hand are already experiencing difficulty in coping with this increased VC capability. Desertion rates are inordinately high. Battle losses have been higher than expected; in fact, four ARVN battalions have been rendered ineffective by VC action in the I and II Corps zones. (48)

Westmoreland's conclusion in the June 7 cable was in keeping

with a theme he would promote all the way through these early months of 1965. It was in keeping with a reality that he had not only seen coming, but anticipated and planned for.

I see no course of action open to us except to reinforce our efforts in South Vietnam with additional US or Third Country forces as rapidly as is practical during the critical weeks ahead.

Additionally, studies must continue and plans develop to deploy even greater forces, if and when required, to attain our objectives or counter enemy initiatives. Ground forces deployed to selected areas along the coast and inland will be used both offensively and defensively. (49)

If this volume reveals anything it is the consistent theme that Westmoreland conducted a relentless effort against Taylor, CINCPAC, and Washington when necessary; the constant advocacy of a US troop build-up. This is revealed not only by his broad strategic commitment to release US ground forces from defensive roles so that they might engage in search and destroy missions, but in several specific cases where Westmoreland advocated a build-up beyond the scope of existing policy.

1. It should be remembered that the public case against landing the 173rd airborne brigade instead of Marines was that the 173rd was essential to the general security of the Pacific area; a job so vital that they could not be transferred in mid-March of 1965. By the 14th of April, JCS had approved Westmoreland's request for the 173rd to be deployed to Bien Hoa/Vung Tau "in order to secure vital US installations." (63)

Only a month earlier, the Pentagon analyst had summarized the situation as too sensitive to order a transfer for the 173rd.

The 173rd, a two battalion airborne brigade, was located on Okinawa. It constituted CINCPAC's air-mobile reserve. When an earlier attempt had been made to deploy the 173rd to DaNang in place of the Marines, CINCPAC had stringently opposed the removal of his only quick-reaction force. (63)

2. Westmoreland, understanding, no doubt, the President's tendency toward gradual, experimental build-up, but himself committed to an immediate deployment, was convinced of the necessity of Third Country involvement. By April 2, 1965 he was capable of convincing the White House of the viability of such an invitation to our allies, and in National Security Council Memo 328,

The President approved the urgent exploration, with Kroean, Australian, and New Zealand Governments, of the possibility of rapid deployment of significant combat elements from their armed forces in parallel with the additional Marine deployment approved. (68)

3. Secretary McNamara spent the third week of July in Saigon ostensibly reviewing "Westmoreland's concept for the deployment of the 44 battalions," which had been requested only a few weeks before. By the time he left, the President had unilaterally authorized the deployments in McNamara's absence, and on their heels, Westmoreland sent McNamara back to Washington with new requests.

McNamara left Saigon bearing Westmoreland recommendations for an even greater increases in forces..."In many respects" McNamara told the press on leaving Vietnam, "it (the situation) has deteriorated since 15 months ago when I was last here." (109)

If Westmoreland was a perpetual advocate of US troop escalation, then Ambassador Taylor and Presidential Advisor George Ball must be seen as his dialectical opposites (at least within the scope of administration officials).

Taylor, in a series of key statements and memos quoted below was actually quite conscious of the US appearance as a new France, a new colonizer. Though constantly offset by the Joint Chiefs, Taylor was a definite proponent of restraint.

In response to Westmoreland's request for additional troops 17 March, 1965, Taylor cabled Washington;

It will raise sensitive command questions with our GVN allies and may encourage them to an attitude of "let the US do it". It will increase our vulnerability to communist propaganda and Third Country criticism as we appear to assume the old French role of alien colonizer and conqueror. (57)

On April 12, Taylor cabled the State Department concerning Westmoreland's request for logistics support with qualified approval;

With regard to the imminence of the need for those divisions, I do not share the fear that the I and II Corps areas are about to fall apart which is expressed in some of the traffic bearing on the logistic build-up. (62)

When the 173rd Airborne Brigade was deployed in April, Taylor again cabled State;

I have just learned by the reference JCS message to CINCPAC that the immediate deployment of the 173rd Airborne Brigade to Bien Hoa/Vung Tau has apparently been approved. This comes as a complete surprise in view of the understanding reached in Washington that we would experiment with the Marines in a step-by-step manner before bringing in other US commitments. I recommend that this deployment be held up until we can sort out all matters relating to it. (63)

Having caught the JCS moving ahead of itself, Taylor

stalled the deployments the only way left to him.

...he had to clear the move with the GVN before the troops could come in. The Prime Minister had not been told at this juncture about the proposed landing of more US troops, and Taylor informed his superiors on 17 April that he did not intend to tell Quat without clearer guidance explaining Washington's intentions. (64)

Aside from Taylor's reservations to the build-up (or at least the speed with which it was being conducted) the strongest voice of dissent within the Administration came from Under Secretary of State George Ball.

Convinced that the US was pouring its resources down the drain in the wrong place, Ball placed himself in direct opposition to the build-up. In a draft memorandum he circulated on the 28th of June, Ball stated that Westmoreland's intention was to go to Phase III combat (Phase III of the 8 May Concept of Operations which called for US/Allied forays inland to secure bases and areas for further operations.) In Ball's view there was absolutely no assurance that the US could with the provision of more ground forces achieve its political objectives in Vietnam. Instead the US risked involving itself in a costly and indeterminate struggle. To further complicate matters, it would be equally impossible to achieve political objectives by expanding the bombing of the North-- risks of involving the USSR and CPR were too great, besides which such action would alienate friends. (105)

From March, when the initial troops landed at DaNang, to July, when a second echelon government official released there to fore secret information concerning the scope of actions of US troops, the military passed through three tactical phases and the US Government passed through at least one major policy phase.

The Marine landing was to be 1. an isolated phenomenon, not indicative of a build-up policy; and 2. a defensive phenomenon in keeping with the attitude that the US role

was to secure air bases and defend them without taking
the military initiative in the countryside. At the
same time the Marines were landing, however, Westmoreland's
staff was writing "Commander's Estimate of the Situation"
and requesting more troops and a change of mission.

At the conclusion of his Estimate, General Westmoreland recommended that the US build-up its combat force in Vietnam to 17 battalions by early June at the latest. He rejected the enclave alternative (a slight modification of the initial policy under which the US landed Marines in mid-March) because it was too negative, (and because, "we cannot win in enclaves.") (465)

By April 2, the National Security Council, with Presidential approval, changed the Marine Mission from a defensive one to an offensive one.

NSC 328 is a pivotal document. It marks the acceptance by the President of the US of the concept that US troops would engage in offensive ground operations against Asian insurgents. (59)

The Pentagon analyst writes;

Whether or not it was publicly offered as a rationale the strategy of deploying troops for the security of bases was short lived. The Marines hardly had their feet dry when several proposals were brought forward to get US troops actively engaged in the ground war. (55)

~~The strategy which followed Security was that of "enclave".~~

It was designed to correspond with the change of mission from defense to offense and President Johnson's overall preoccupation with making the eminent build-up appear gradual and experimental. Johnson was evidently concerned that the US not appear too aggressive too soon. In the wake of a rising sentiment in the JCS for overt missions which encompassed Search and Destroy, the enclave transpired during March and April while in fact, during these months,

US troops were already engaging in offensive, inland actions under a Presidentially invoked shield of secrecy arising out of the April 1-2 National Security Council meetings. According to the analyst, the debate between the enclave theory and the security theory (whether to switch from an essentially defensive theory to an offensive one) "...went on largely behind the scene while the American public was in ignorance of the proceedings." (55)

At the President's request, all NSC members were admonished in NSAM 328 not to allow the release of any premature publicity for the actions dealing with Marines and their missions. As a result, the change of mission was not publicized until it crept out almost by accident in a State Department release on June 8. (59)

In other words, the US ground forces in Vietnam supplemented by Third Country forces, were conducting offensive missions for over three months outside the knowledge of the American public.

On July 28, President Johnson held a press conference in which he denied the change of mission which had been in effect since the first of April.

Question: Mr. President, does the fact that you are sending additional forces to Vietnam imply any change in the existing policy of relying mainly on the South Vietnamese to carry out offensive operations and using American forces to guard installations and to act as emergency backup?
The President: It does not imply any change in policy whatever. It does not imply change of objective. (112)

There were built in problems with the President's security veil, as revealed in the analyst's following comments.

...the unduely long interregnum inevitably led to leaks. The Marines incurred some 200 casualties, including 18 killed, as they went about tidying up their TACR's in April and May. (31)

When State Press Officer Robert McCloskey stated, "American forces would be available for combat support together with Vietnamese forces when and if necessary," (81) the White House was incensed and on June 9 tried to cover itself by releasing a public counter statement;

There has been no change in the mission of US ground combat units in Vietnam in recent days or weeks. The President has issued no order of any kind in this regard to General Westmoreland recently or at any other time. (81-82)

(The formal text of NCSM 328 is in direct contradiction to this release: "The President approved a change of mission for all Marine battalions deployed to Vietnam to permit their more active use under conditions to be established and approved by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary of State." (69)

In light of NLF victories, deteriorating SVN economy, and the seemingly limitless proportions of US intervention, President Johnson went to congress and requested additional funding for the war (700 million) "to meet mounting military requirements in Vietnam." (109) That request was on the 4th of May. It paralleled a mounting Administration commitment which had been voiced as early as April 30 by Secretary McNamara;

I want it clearly understood that there is an unlimited appropriation available for the financing of aid to Vietnam. Under no circumstances is lack of money to stand in the way of aid to that nation. (107)

Policy is: anything that will strengthen the position of the GVN will be sent. (108)

To: Len & Sam
From: Paul
July 18, 1972

Notes on volumes IV C 4,5: the 1965 US buildup

Sam's discussion of the IV C 4,5 buildup is good; I think we pretty much agree that the transition from "security" to "enclave" to "search and destroy" was a sham to cover single-minded escalation. Here I want to present what evidence exists in the #70s to expose the sham. Not to ask-"Did they believe what they were saying?" nor "What did they intend?" , but "Even if they did believe it, does the story as presented make any sense?"

Washington's acquiescence in MACV's direct pressure for buildup required a new 'strategy' at each step; we can show each was based on a premise demonstrably false before and during the implementation of the strategy. Here we look at the security and enclave stages: a description of each, the premises involved, and the prior evidence against each premise. Search & destroy is of course a lot more complicated and is not dealt with here.

I The Security Stage

(A) Strategy:

Deterrence/reaction to the possibility of DRV/CPR intervention.

(1) Background

This line of thinking runs right through the history, but for the present purposes we need only go back as far as 1959.

Since the origination of OPLAN 32 in 1959, the Marines have been scheduled for deployment to Da Nang. Seven CINCPAC and SEATO contingency plans and a myriad of supporting plans at lower echelons reflect this same deployment. (CINCPAC-March, 1965: IVC4.7)

The PP describes the decisionmaking process as moving "at such a rapid pace as almost to defy isolated analysis" (IVC4.14) yet despite a confusion in the goals of US intervention, the planning was in line with earlier CINCPAC OPLANS.

William Bundy's own papers mentioned CINCPAC OPLAN 32-64 and CINCPAC OPLAN 39-65, both of which contingency plans provided for the input of US ground combat forces into SEA in response to Chicom or DRV aggression or a combination of the two. (late-64: IVC4.14)

The Joint Chiefs of Staff also made a proposal for the introduction of ground troops in their 23 November 1964 memo to the Secretary of Defense. In that JCSM, which was principally concerned with analysis of various courses of action to increase pressure on the DRV, the JCS recommended the collateral deployment of Marine units to Da Nang and other units from Okinawa to Ton Son Nhut Air Base for purposes of security and deterrence in accordance with CINCPAC OPLANS. (IVC4.14)

Neither of these [JCS-proposed] deployments were for purposes of counterinsurgency but rather were intended to deter any overt DRV/Chicom retaliation and to put us in a better posture in case the deterrent failed. The JCS forwarded this proposal to the Secretary again on 4 March 1965, still without mention of the possibility of ground combat action against the Viet Cong. (IVC4.15)

At the time of the DaNang decision, MACV employed security alone as the necessitating factor. Yet, as the PP admits (IVC4.i) and a cable from Taylor to the State Department shows (22 Feb 65: IVC4.2), the possibility of DRV intervention did figure in the early US troop deployment deliberations. Finally, looking at the buildup with hindsight, the MACV Command History is revealing

On the day the Marines were landing at Da Nang it is said in the History that "thus step one in the buildup of forces had been taken and subsequent steps appeared to be assured." The History also states that "the Phase II, RVN, portions of OPLAN 32-64 were essentially implemented by the U.S. buildup during 1965, although on a larger scale than planned." (IVC4.17)

(2) Premise:

The root assumption of deterrence/reaction to DRV/CPR intervention as a justification for US troop deployment is, of course, that such intervention is a significant possibility.

(3) Conflicting Evidence:

This possibility is discounted by US intelligence reports. The buildup decisions were made at the same time as US intelligence was denying the likelihood of such DRV/CPR intervention:

The JCS consistently mentioned the problem ... ["possible intervention in the conflict by elements of the North Vietnamese Army or the Communist Chinese Army or a combination of both."] as an additional justification for deployments they were advocating, but the National Intelligence Board just as consistently discounted the possibility of such intervention. (early 1965: IVC5.9)

The only intelligence estimate dealing with the ramifications of this [security] strategy came when the intelligence community was tasked to predict probable communist reactions to the input of an entire Korean division for base security duty in South Vietnam. The SNIE resulting, dated 19 March 1965, indicated that input of Chinese or North Korean 'volunteers' was very unlikely to occur. (IVC5.113)

(B) Strategy:

Increasing US airbase security (and its corollary: the release of ARVN troops from base security)

(1) Background:

Westmorland's request for the DaNang Marines and Taylor's remarks on the same date were phrased in terms of base security.

On 22 February 1965, after a visit to Da Nang by General Throckmorton, then Deputy COMUSMACV, General Westmorland cabled CINCPAC requesting two Marine BLT's to assist in protecting the base against Viet Cong raids, sabotage, and mortar attacks. (IVC4.2)

Turning to possible uses for additional Marines in Da Nang area, I can see several which are worth examining. First, they could be used to reinforce protection of Da Nang airbase against Bien Hoa-type of attack by fire or against combined VC fire and ground attack. (Taylor-22 Feb 65: IVC4.2)

It has been suggested that an ancillary benefit to deployment of additional Marines to Da Nang would be freeing of ARVN units for use elsewhere in mobile operations. (Taylor-22 Feb 65: IVC4.3)

Again, this was the line Taylor used in raising the Marines to Danang question with Quat on Mar 1, 1965 (IVC4.5).

As the PP remarks, the "security strategy" effectively lasted for three weeks.

The Marines hardly had their feet dry when several proposals were brought forward to get U.S. troops actively engaged in the ground war.....The strategy of security effectively became a dead letter on the first of April, but the change in strategy was not revealed publicly until the 8th and 9th of June. (IVC5.55)

(2) Premise:

The bombing campaign created a need for US airbase protection against NLF/DRV retaliation until RT and ARVN could successfully frustrate the liberation forces.

The short-lived strategy of security saw the deployments as a necessary evil to meet an immediate need -- the bolstering of base security in South Vietnam for the air effort against North Vietnam. ...The strategy of security was intimately tied to the Rolling Thunder bombing program. It remained alive only so long as the decisionmaking principals were reasonably confident that the bombing was going to produce the desired effects on the DRV/VC will to persist. (IVC5.113)

(3) Conflicting Evidence:

The PP version:

The collapse of security is seen in this light--

In conclusion, it seems clear that the debate over ground commitments and accompanying strategy followed closely the course of expectations about the Rolling Thunder bombing program and the development of the situation in South Vietnam itself. The strategy of security was eclipsed because Rolling Thunder was taking too long. (IVC5.9)

As the Marines land, Washington waits expectantly for the first results of its RT/security plan:

It appears that, for the moment, with the possible exception of General Westmorland, his staff, and perhaps an important ally in the person of General Johnson. in Washington, the Marine deployment was taken at face value and that the official Washington hopes were pinned on early NVN response to the Rolling Thunder pressure, then just in its beginning stages. (IVC4.19)

The March evaluation showed RT/security to be unsuccessful on a short-term basis, thus bringing the policy reevaluation which produced NSAM 328.

This PP version isn't credible: such an evaluation and reevaluation could not have occurred in only 24 days (March 8-April 1, 1965). The documents show, further, that the US knew a policy of frustrating the NLF/DRV through prompt RT success could not work: (a) the NLF was much closer to victory than stalemate (let alone frustration), (b) RT was by its very nature a long-range program. Awareness of these two important facts existed throughout the Spring of 1965.

February 7:

MacGeorgeBundy in his Memorandum to the President dated 7 February 1965 estimated that without additional U.S. action, the GVN would collapse within the next year. (IVC4.12)

March 11:

Unless (and this is primary), NVN support is checked, GVN military and paramilitary resources increased, pacification goals and concepts refined, administrative efficiency improved, and an adequate political-psychological base created, there is little likelihood of stemming the tide of the VC insurgency. (U.S.Mission Council in Saigon-Ambassador's sitrep: IVC4.15)

March 24:

The question, according to McNaughton, was: "Can the situation inside South Vietnam be bottomed out (a) without extreme measures against the DRV and (b) without deployment of large numbers of U.S. (and 3rd country) combat troops inside SVN?" McNaughton's answer was "perhaps, but probably no." (IVC5.60)

March 26:

In summary, General Westmorland said in the Estimate that the program of air activity against the North, while it might ultimately succeed in causing the DRV to cease its support of the war, would not in the short run have any major effect on the situation in the South. The RVNAF, although at the moment performing fairly well, would not be able in the face of a VC summer offensive to hold in the South long enough for the bombing to become effective. (COMUSMACV Commander's Estimate of the Situation: IVC5.44-45)

April 1-2:

There was sober awareness that the North Vietnamese were not going to quit and that the U.S. was well on its way to being committed on the ground. The Rolling Thunder program, if it was going to bear any fruit at all, certainly was not going to do so in the next few months. (IVC5.60)

April 9:

(1) The DRV was not likely to quit within the next six months; and in any case, they were more likely to give up because of VC failure in the South than because of bomb-induced "pain" in the North. It could take up to two years to demonstrate VC failure. (Honolulu consensus: IVC5.71)

Moreover, had Washington really done an evaluation of the March, 1965, Vietnam situation it would have to have centered ^{on} the lull in NLF activity--a sign of possible RT/ security success.

March, 1965: Events in March were encouraging... RVNAF ground operations were highlighted by renewed operational effort...VC activity was considerably below the norm of the preceding six months and indications were that the enemy was engaged in the re-supply and re-positioning of units possible in preparation for a new offensive, probably in the II Corps area... (COMUSMACV Monthly Evaluation: IVC5.44)

If RT had taken effect so soon, these are precisely the sorts of results we might have expected to see. The speculations about an NLF buildup probably in reality were included in the evaluation because MACV knew the lull couldn't be a result of RT. It was simply too soon; the NLF was too strong.

(C) Conclusions about the Security Stage

Two strategies appear directly in the #70s material on the security period of March 8-April 1, 1965: each based on a premise which was contradicted by evidence then available and accepted in Washington. The story as presented in the PP doesn't make sense.

II The Enclave Stage

(A) Strategy:

Denial of victory to the NLF to the point where they give up in frustration.

(1) Background

In the PP, the timing of the enclave period seems fairly clear cut.

The early April NSC meetings signalled the beginning of an enclave strategy. (IVC5.60)

Honolulu brought the Saigon and Washington decision makers together to sanctify an expanded enclave strategy. (IVC5.71)

The beginning of the decisive month of June 1965 saw the U.S. in the infant stages of its enclave strategy. (IVC5.83)

The enclave strategy was finished [June 26], and the debate from then on centered on how much force and to what end. (IVC5.104)

The security strategy collapsed ostensibly because of the failure of RT to achieve quick results. We are asked to believe the US subsequently embraced an enclave strategy which relied on the very same premise.

It [the enclave strategy] was based on the assumption that victory could be denied to the enemy in the South while Rolling Thunder punished him in the North. Eventually the U.S. would achieve its objectives because the enemy in frustration would give up. (IVC5.9)

That strategy was the basis for the enclavists and it promised success through denial of victory to the Viet Cong. The enemy was to be denied victory because he would be unable to seize a certain number of decisive areas held by U.S. and Third Country forces, despite any successes he might enjoy throughout the rest of the country. Realizing his own impotence, the enemy would be moved to seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict. (IVC5.93)

(2) Premise

As with security, that ARVN could hold on until (and as long as) RT took effect.

(3) Conflicting Evidence

In an earlier section, I quoted from US officials showing their awareness that RT couldn't succeed on a short-run basis. That evidence applies as well to this strategy. Here are some more:

early April:

Immediately following the NSC meetings of the 1st of April, CIA Director McCone circulated a memorandum in which he argued that changing the mission of U.S. troops in Vietnam to offensive operations would merely lead to requests for more and more troops for a war the U.S. "cannot win". (IVC5.115-6)

[Incidentally, for making the same estimate as McCone, that "the war in Asia cannot be won;" the PP calls Wayne Morse a "misguided zealot" (IVC5.122)]

June 22:

General Westmorland replied [June 22] that there was no evidence the VC/DRV would alter their plans regardless of what the U.S. did in the next six months. (IVC5.104)

The best example of official awareness of this situation is COMUSMACV himself. In his Commander's Estimate (March 26) we find a disjointed syllogism:

The analysis is predicated upon the assumption that basic strategy of retaliatory and punitive air strikes against NVN will, in time, bring about desired results, that is, supply and support of the insurgency will be terminated by DRV and hopefully DRV/VC High Command will direct the cessation of offensive operations. (IVC5.85)

If basic strategy of punitive bombing in RVN (sic!) does not take effect by mid-year additional deployments of U.S. and 3rd Country forces should be considered, including introduction of full MEF into I Corps. (IVC5.86)

...the program of air activity against the North... would not in the short run have any major effect on the situation in the South. (IVC5.44-45)

For Westmorland, the conclusion is inescapable; he recommends aggressive US combat action against "VC efforts to control the Kontum, Pleiku, Binh Dinh region" (IVC5.87) Thus two and one-half weeks after security began, and one week before "The early April NSC meetings signalled the beginning of an enclave strategy." (IVC5.60) Westmorland made clear his rejection of both in favor of what came to be called the search and destroy strategy.

(C) Conclusions

The PP describes "enclave" as an alternative strategy which went out of favor as had "security". The same frustration theory is offered, yet behind it is the consistent policy of an expanding role for US troops. There is a significant difference between a strategy which includes avenues for experimentation should change become necessary and a strategy known to be fruitless, serving as a convenient preliminary in a larger design.

Experimentation with escalation was an element of the enclave stage from the beginnings. The PP description of the April 1-2 Honolulu meetings offers (along with frustration) the following reasoning:

To insure control of troops untested in the environment of Asian insurgency, to provide security for the orderly construction of an expandable logistics base, and to provide for rapid and easy exit if the situation suddenly deteriorated, the forces we to be placed in coastal enclaves with their backs to the sea. (IVC5.114)

The relatively low intensity of operations to which the Allied forces would be exposed would permit low risk experimentation with them. (IVC5.114)

Another approach is suggested by the PP:

...the enclave strategy, as a means to limit the amount and use of U.S. combat force in Vietnam, was certainly overcome by events. It was not until the 18th of August that an operation fitting the paradigm description of the Taylor enclave concept, Operation STARLIGHT, was conducted with dramatic success south of the Chu Lai enclave. (27-30 June: IVC5.82, emphasis added)

We can view the "enclave strategy" as representing simultaneously a limitation on escalation to the few who resisted MACV and an opportunity for experimentation with escalation to Westmorland and his supporters. It was a failure, as was RT, for reasons known in advance.

One freak opinion stands out in IVC5. I am not sure how it might be useful to us, but it is worth remembering:

It seems clear, however, that Admiral Sharp [CINCPAC] was not really an exponent of the enclave strategy. His insistence that the Airmobile Division stick to Binh Dinh was prompted by his conviction that the U.S. forces should operate in close proximity to the objective of the Viet war -- the people. He was consistent in this approach when he pushed for deployment of the ROK RCT to Quang Ngai, where it was originally supposed to go and where there were plenty of people to be pacified, instead of to sparsely populated Cam Ranh for unremunerative security duty. (IVC5.92)